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Its Own Reward

A Guide to Community-Based Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Programs

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Introduction

Purpose of the Guide

This resource guide is intended to provide support to individuals and groups involved in community-based adult literacy tutor programs. It is also intended for those who want to know more about starting a program.

The guide contains information about volunteer tutor programs, including tutor training and volunteer management. It is by no means a complete guide – it simply gives a general overview, with references to some useful resources.

Introduction to Adult Literacy Tutoring

In many communities, there are adults with literacy needs who cannot or do not access the existing services, such as the college/university Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. In small communities, there may not be adult literacy services of any kind.

When services do exist, people may not be aware of them, may not realize that services are free of charge or that they are eligible to receive them. Even when they are aware, there may be a variety of reasons why adults do not participate in regularly-scheduled classes.

For example, many people work shift hours, have young children at home, or other fixed responsibilities that present barriers to their participation. An example often cited by learners themselves, is that confidence is low at the beginning, and often, there is anxiety about learning in a classroom setting.

A one-to-one tutoring program presents another option in which adults can find the services and support they seek, in a community-based setting. Generally speaking, tutoring programs offer flexibility in terms of scheduling, and learning is centred around a person's interests, motivation and goals. In addition, many learners who are making the transition to college ABE course will retain the support of their community-based tutors for a period of time. Tutors can assist learners in a variety of ways.

Defining the Need

If there is a community literacy planning group where you live, the gap in adult literacy services may have already been described in the community plan. If not, then some research should be done to assess community needs, and also to determine if there is sufficient capacity to operate a program.

Typical Programs

There are many Volunteer Tutor Programs in BC. Some are offered through:

- Community groups
- School Districts
- Community Colleges and Universities
- Provincial and Federal Correctional Institutions
- Workplaces
- Organizations such as the John Howard Society and the YM/YWCA

> "Each community-based program is unique – their flexibility and responsiveness to local needs and learner interests are a large part of the model's appeal…"
>
> *Learning Without Borders: An Introduction to Community-Based Adult Literacy in British Columbia*

Getting Started

Considerations - what needs to be in place

A host agency for the program. This agency is an established society, usually a literacy organization with registered charitable status for the purpose of requesting, receiving and managing program funds, and to ensure that services are responsible and accountable.

Funds to operate the program. The Ministry of Adult Education and Labor Market Development (ALMD) supports some Tutoring Programs in the province through the Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP). Communities find many other sources of funding, depending on the needs of their particular program, and of the organization.

A Volunteer Tutor Coordinator. Often a paid, part-time position. This person is considered pivotal to the success of the program.

A corps of dedicated volunteers, trained as adult literacy tutors.

An Administrator. A paid position, or a function of the host agency, Board of Directors, or some other arrangement. In most instances, the administrator takes direction from the Board to ensure that the program has adequate support, and that the usual administrative services are provided (payroll, insurance, etc.), with attention given to all funders' requirements.

Hiring the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator

The hiring committee

The committee is comprised of a small group, perhaps three or four people, with some background and experience in a literacy program or related field. For each person being interviewed, provide members of the committee with the pre-established criteria against which to grade the application.

Sample newspaper ad

> The Mt. Olympus Literacy Society is looking for an exceptional coordinator – one who is passionate about literacy and learning – to implement a community-based Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutoring Program in the Mt. Olympus Valley region.
>
> In cooperation with the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, the successful candidate will direct all aspects of the Tutoring Program.
>
> Mt. Olympus Literacy Society is committed to the provision of adult and family literacy programs in our community. We strive to raise awareness and to provide easy access to the services we offer.
>
> For more information, please ask for a copy of the Job Description at ... , or go to our website at ...

The job description

Please refer to 'Responsibilities of the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator' (page 3). A sample list of qualifications for the position would include:

- Relevant post-secondary degree or diploma, or equivalent experience
- Demonstrated knowledge of literacy issues and learning challenges
- Community development experience an asset
- Proven ability to facilitate groups, organize and manage projects
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Ability to work with groups and individuals with diverse backgrounds
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team, as well as independently
- Cultural sensitivity knowledge and training an asset

Responsibilities of the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator

The Volunteer Tutor Coordinator helps to build the confidence and abilities of new tutors so that they can be effective in their work with learners. It is a very satisfying experience for everyone involved in the program – coordinators, tutors and learners – when learning and confidence grow in uniquely different ways. It is also what makes the job so interesting and rewarding. These tasks vary from place to place, depending on the type of program and the support available. Below is a sample description of the responsibilities and challenges involved in the work of a Volunteer Tutor Coordinator.

Recruit and select volunteer tutors

Volunteers come with a variety of skills and interests. To guide the selection of potential tutors, it is helpful to have some criteria that relate specifically to literacy service delivery. During the selection interview, the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator takes note of any special skills and interests, expressed preferences or requirements pertaining to the work, as well as the volunteer's time availability for tutoring and taking the scheduled training.

Direct the training of volunteer tutors

Plan content, schedule sessions, and make all necessary arrangements for the delivery of the training, keeping within the budget allocated for this purpose. See section on Tutor Training.

Interview potential learners (in-take)

The Volunteer Tutor Coordinator conducts an informal assessment of each learner's literacy skills, and helps to clarify their interests and goals. Here again, there are good resources to guide the process, e.g., CARA - Canadian Adult Reading Assessment.

Match learners with compatible tutors

The Volunteer Tutor Coordinator provides valuable support by arranging the initial meeting and assisting the tutor and learner in clarifying long- and short-term goals. As needed, the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator assists the tutor with specific lesson-planning ideas around the goals, and provides guidance in the use of suitable resources.

Regularly monitor progress of tutor-learner pairs

Most volunteer tutors appreciate the benefits of a program that is monitored at regular intervals. For tutors and learners, it is an opportunity to talk about their current learning activities; for the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator, it is a chance to observe and invite questions.

From time to time, it may be necessary to re-assess the tutor-learner match: for example, a learner needs a tutor with math skills (not all tutors are comfortable teaching math), so a re-match is arranged.

Maintain records of tutor-learner activity and progress

The Volunteer Tutor Coordinator keeps program statistics (a reporting requirement of some funders). Tutors may be asked to submit a short monthly report to support this aspect of the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator's responsibility.

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Responsibilities of the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator

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Prepare and submit reports in a timely manner

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, and to adequately represent the program to the host organization and to funders, it is necessary to compile data and prepare reports. Reports usually reflect program activities, participation (numbers of learners, tutors, and other volunteers), community involvement, and other activities.

In part, this information serves to measure outcomes as they relate to the intended goals of the program over a period of time. However, reports do not always reflect all of the valuable outcomes that are a direct or indirect result of participating in a Tutoring Program.

Be involved in regular evaluation of the program

Program evaluation methods and guides can be obtained through the Literacy BC library; some are listed in the Resource section of this guide.

Additional tasks

These responsibilities and activities may be shared by the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator, other staff, and/or volunteers and learners:

- create a space that is open, inviting and conducive to adult learning (see *Learning Without Borders*, p.7);
- acquire the necessary material resources – a variety of adult literacy-level books, workbooks, games, manipulatives, paper, pens, whiteboards, maps, computers;
- organize a system for the use of material resources, i.e., lending and returning books, etc.;
- organize appropriate space or location for tutoring;
- apply current volunteer management practices;
- involve learners in activities, decision-making, public awareness and general support of the program;
- plan small group tutoring / learning activities for learners;
- plan to recognize volunteer tutors' contribution to the program;
- develop a philosophy for the program; create a mission statement;
- orient the Board to the program and its activities – its members are advocates for literacy in the community, and it is important that they have a good understanding of the underlying values of the program, as well administrative information;
- network with community partners and the community in general to promote awareness of the program.

A dedicated corps of trained volunteers is essential to every program.

What Makes an Effective Tutor?

Aside from applying knowledge and skills acquired in Tutor Training, the tutor attempts to establish a trusting relationship with the learner, and in so doing, demonstrates a variety of personal qualities and skills. The following list is far from exhaustive. There are as many qualities and skills as there are good tutors in our midst.

- **Acceptance** of people as they are, with their past experiences, their current circumstances, and their dreams – even when these seem unattainable or unrealistic.
- **Adaptability** to different ways of doing things, to expectations and changing needs and circumstances.
- **Belief** in a person's ability to learn… that change and progress are possible.
- **Caring and respect** for the learner and his/her unique situation and needs.
- **Communication skills** – to explain and demonstrate things clearly, in order to avoid frustration on the part of the learner.
- **Cultural sensitivity** – to build awareness about cultural diversity and the implications for tutoring, plan to include this topic in tutor training or as part of in-service development.
- **Encouragement** – acknowledging each small success and keeping a positive attitude during the learning process.
- **Listening skills** – to be an active listener and an empathetic responder, provide feedback to the learner that what they say is valued.
- **Organizational skills** – to maintain a focus on the learner's goals when preparing tutoring sessions; mentors organizational skills with the learner.
- **Patience** – to persevere without becoming frustrated when gains seem small.
- **Self-awareness** – of one's own non-verbal behaviors, biases, etc.
- **Sense of humor** – to ease the tensions that may arise from the challenge of learning; to make the learning process more enjoyable and less threatening.

Roles, Responsibilities and Risk Management

It is important that tutors have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Volunteer Tutor Coordinators, Volunteer Tutors and Adult Learners, and of how the roles relate to each other. A list of basic assumptions about these roles is outlined in Appendix 1. This information is especially valuable as volunteers are not always provided with a "job description". There are real benefits in knowing the scope and the boundaries of the task at hand. People assume their roles more fully when they understand the expectations, know how they will be supported, and agree to the conditions of engagement.

Clarification of roles and responsibilities is an important element of both volunteer management and risk management. There is less likelihood of confusion and discomfort when, for example, tutors understand that they are assuming the role of tutor/facilitator rather than of counselor.

Risk management is another aspect of volunteer programs. The safety and security of volunteers and learners should be considered very carefully. For example, ensure that volunteers are aware of policies and procedures concerning emergency situations (fire, medical, etc.), personal safety, and unusual occurrences that bear special attention. In the interest of learner safety, some organizations require that all staff and volunteers tutors get a Criminal Record Check.

Support and Recognition

Tutor Support

In-Service development is a form of support that helps tutors to expand their knowledge and skills:

- introduce new techniques or approaches to tutoring
- new resources, information about program development
- give tutors a chance to share their experiences with each other – always appreciated
- invite a guest speaker with a relevant topic of interest
- review elements of the tutor training to refresh skills
- whenever possible, provide information and access to local professional or personal development opportunities

Volunteer Recognition

Plan to celebrate your tutors' wonderful work with an annual volunteer appreciation event, or with some form of individual acknowledgment of their contribution – a card or a gift from the organization.

Literacy BC's Volunteer Recognition program recognizes the contributions of volunteers province-wide, and uses different and innovative ways of recognizing and supporting volunteers locally.

Volunteer Tutor Coordinator Support

The Regional Literacy Coordinator networks with all programs in the region and is a source of support to the Volunteer Tutor Coordinator. The RLC has current information about practitioner training events, best practices, new projects, etc., and is knowledgeable about regional issues, partnership development, funding opportunities, and more. Find out how to contact your RLC at the Literacy BC website.

Professional Development

Look out for professional development opportunities (such as Literacy BC's Fall Literacy Practitioner Training).

Learner Support

Retention of learners is a challenge in every Tutoring Program. Here are a few suggestions to enhance learner participation:

- Apply for funds to assist learners with emergency expenses, like transportation, daycare, clothing or other costs that make a difference between attending and not attending a literacy program (e.g. the Paul Gallagher Community Access Fund through Literacy BC).
- Make a bulletin board available for learners to use exclusively. Learners can put up notices, helpful tips, humor, good writing, poetry, artwork, etc. (Note: some organizations require that all notices are reviewed by a staff person before posting.)
- Involve willing learners in fund-raising events, speakers' bureaus, newsletters, etc. Learners often have talent and expertise to assist in a variety of activities. Also, they acquire new skills and experience while working in a team with others.
- When learners indicate they are ready to advance in their studies, provide orientation to the college ABE courses, registration procedures, etc. Sometimes, a small group visit to a scheduled class can be arranged through an instructor.

Tutor Training – Basic Elements

In order for tutor training to have the greatest impact, it must be well planned, adequately resourced and effectively managed.

Planning and scheduling

Determine the length of each session and the period of time for the entire training, e.g., three hours for each session, twice a week - every Tuesday and Thursday morning, for three weeks (18 hours in all). Choose a time of the day or evening that suits most people.

Training is delivered in a variety of ways. Sometimes a trainer from outside the organization is hired to deliver the training. Then, because of budgetary considerations (travel and accommodation costs), training is scheduled over a shorter period of time, e.g., two and half days.

Ensure that there are sufficient binders and copies of training handouts (three-hole punched), pens, paper, etc. Trainees may be offered a binder with a complete set of the training material, or get the material one session at a time.

Plan to display some of the resources that you will refer to in the training.

Lastly, everyone appreciates a timely break; provide refreshments if the budget allows, or ask people to bring their own or bring to share.

Evaluation

Build evaluation into the training. Evaluation forms are used for this purpose, either after each session or on completion of the training. And there are many other creative ways to do it.

At the conclusion of training, tutors can be presented with a Tutor Code of Ethics to read and adopt. A sample is provided in Appendix 2.

Training Topics

Although the content of any tutor training varies from place to place, there are basic elements that are consistent with all programs and considered essential to the formation of strong tutoring skills.

This guide does not provide a detailed explanation of training topics and resource tools. Literacy BC has a library of excellent resources to support training needs in the province. Please refer to the Resources section for more information.

Listed below and on page 8 are selected common training topics.

- Introduction to Literacy
- Principles of Adult Learning
- Stages of Learning
- Barriers to Learning
- Learning Styles

Tutor Training – Basic Elements

READING training topics

What is 'phonics'?

Phonological awareness through listening

Sounds of the English language

Sight words – basic sight word list

Word attack strategies – decoding exercises

Reading comprehension skills

Getting meaning from context cues

Thinking skills – prior knowledge

Asking questions – 5 W's

Cloze exercises

Reading fluency

Fluency and comprehension:

Echo reading / duet reading exercises

WRITING training topics

Transition from oral to written words

Language experience stories

Demystifying writing

Getting started: brainstorming, webbing

The basic paragraph

Keeping a dialogue journal

Doing a book report

Printing and cursive writing

SPELLING training topics

Considerations when teaching spelling

Common spelling patterns

Spelling rules

Strategies for spelling

NUMERACY training topics

Overcoming "math anxiety"

A numeracy inventory

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES training topics

Learning disabilities

Strategies

LESSON PLANNING training topics

Working with learner-identified goals

Long and short term goals - reasonable expectations

Guidelines for developing a typical learning plan

Encouraging good study skills and work habits in learners

Learning and tutoring resources

Lending / returning system

Tracking progress: tutor-learner activity reports

Examples of Programs

Literacy Victoria

One-to-one volunteer tutoring services are offered to adult learners seeking help with basic reading, writing, numeracy, computer and essential skills. All programs are free, and serve 130+ learners/tutors throughout the year. The learners range in age from 19 to 85 years and come from a diverse cross-section of society. Particular focus is placed on programming for Aboriginals, those with special needs, and marginalized learners who may be homeless or the working poor. Partnership with community agencies is a vital part of service delivery.

Houston Link to Learning

This program for Houston families with low literacy levels meets a need for informal learning. Activities include a community kitchen in which adults cook, teach, learn and share together; a community garden in which they learn to grow produce; café meetings to discuss current issues; parent-child drop-in programs; parenting skills workshops; learner license classes; and student-led workshops. 60 adults are typically served each year.

Carnegie Learning Centre

In partnership with Capilano College, Carnegie Community Association and the City of Vancouver, this program reaches out to the homeless, people living in single room occupancy hotels, seniors, immigrants and others with literacy barriers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. It develops learning spaces throughout the neighbourhood, and delivers special issues workshops (e.g. information and options for people receiving residential school compensation). It includes one-on-one tutoring, small group instruction, assessment, and recruiting and training volunteer tutors. The program works with 45 core learners and 150 other adults.

Getting on Board

The Moricetown band's Kyah Wiget Education Society works in partnership with Northwest Community College to improve literacy levels of its members and offers English and math courses in preparation for the Dogwood. This program is based on small group work and tutoring by peers and volunteer tutors, and uses Aboriginal curricula developed locally. Field trips expand horizons for the 25 participants. Elders, guest speakers and members of the community offer informal workshops and exploration of the Wet'suwet'en language.

Partner Assisted Learning

Based in Williams Lake, PAL is run by the Cariboo Chilcotin Partners for Literacy Society in partnership with Thompson Rivers University and offers free to one-to-one adult literacy tutoring in the city and surrounding areas. It supports 25 adults, from non-readers to Grade 12 level, who are uncomfortable with classroom or online courses, and focuses on their individual needs. Support is also available for those with ESL challenges.

More information

You can find out about these and other program models in your area and throughout the province by visiting the BC Literacy Directory at www.literacybc.ca/directory.

Resources

Borrow materials free of charge from Literacy BC's Provincial Literacy Resource Centre, by mail, anywhere in BC. Email library@literacy.bc.ca or visit www.literacybc.ca and search the catalogue for additional resources.

Training, Toolkits & Manuals for Tutors

Doing it for ourselves: a collection of resource tools for volunteer tutor program coordination. Mary Thompson Boyd and Paula Davies, Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education, 1997.

The purpose of this collection is to assist volunteer tutor program coordinators to design their own programs.

Teaching reading to adults: a balanced approach. Pat Campbell. Edmonton: Grassroots Press, 2003. Book and VHS Video. 428.40715 C36

How to assess, plan for and teach adult learners.

Canadian Adult Reading Assessment: Student's Assessment Booklet and Instructor's Manual and CD-ROM. Pat Campbell and Flo Brokop. Edmonton: Grassroots Press, 2000. 428.00715 C36 and Manual

A useful assessment tool for placing learners and for assessing their progress.

Literacy tutor training course. Carmen Rodriguez. Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education. Date unknown. 371.394 R62

This manual is the 10-session course outline for a literacy tutor training course. Each session is briefly described, followed by sample handouts. Student evaluations of this course are included.

Literacy tutor's guide: adult tutoring: reading for meaning and the writing experience. Edmonton: Centre for Family Literacy, 2006. 371.394 L5847 2006 c.1

Based on the Centre for Family Literacy's training for tutors of adults, this guide is divided into two sections. Adult Tutoring: Reading for Meaning and Adult Tutoring: The Writing Experience. It is sold in sets of 20 and is designed to be used as a practical manual by tutors.

A tutor's guide: setting literacy goals and recording progress. Susan Reid. NZ: Workbase, 2005.

This guide sets out a process for tutors and learners working together to: set literacy goals; unpack those goals into realistic steps; identify appropriate strategies and resources for each of those steps; discuss and record progress; report to other stakeholders.

A tutor's guide: initial assessment. Susan Reid. NZ: Workbase, 2005.

This guide provides a method for developing, implementing and analysing an initial assessment process.

Tutor tools. Edited by Verna Beswick. Calgary: Literacy Alberta, 2004. 371.394 B4 2004

This booklet is a collection of "tips, strategies, tools, tactics, ideas, and guidelines".

The tutor's toolbox. Bill Graham. Burns Lake: College of New Caledonia, 1996. 371.394 T87

A valuable booklet, unfortunately out of print but widely available through libraries and on literacy program shelves.

Literacy volunteers: value added toolkit. Barrie, ON: Community Literacy of Ontario, 2005. 371.394 M36

This toolkit was developed based on a research project that looked at the value of volunteering. The toolkit contains practical resources for planning and recruiting volunteers.

Websites

The Learning Edge http://thewclc.ca/edge/

The Learning Edge is a newspaper for adult learners. This site has stories and activities with sound and video. It also has tests on subjects like math and reading. Subjects include health, safety, work, newspaper ads, household bills, and more. Learners can hear articles read to them and read along with the text. Adult new readers can use this site on their own. Some may need tutor support.

The Northern Edge http://www.nwt.literacy.ca *(click on 'Adult Literacy' then 'The Northern Edge')*

The Northern Edge is an online newspaper for adult learners. This site has activities with sound and video. It also has tests on subjects like math and language. Learners can hear the articles read to them and they can read along with the text. There are four newsletters online, by date. Topics include math, learning styles, reading, animals, nature, culture, student writing, maps, paying a telephone bill, and many more.

Literacy Activities http://www.mcedservices.com/litex.htm

In these sessions, you will learn how to write a check, use a timesheet, fill out a form, and read a map. The lessons have sound and videos. The learning activities have sound and are multiple choice questions. An answer key is provided.

Writing Den http:www2.actden.com/writ_den/

Content: This site offers help with writing skills for many skill levels and topic areas. Topics include tops (sentences, paragraphs and essays), a word-of-the-day e-mail you can sign up to receive, and more. Learners will find the "Tip-o-matic" section very helpful.

How to Write a Sentence and a Paragraph http://www.tustin.k12.ca.us/cyberseminar/paragraph.htm

This site will show you how to write a good sentence and a paragraph. Tutor support may be needed.

How to Make Complete Sentences http://www.geocities.com/fifth_grade_tpes/complete.html

This site shows how to write a complete sentence. It has practice sheets. The site uses a large font that is easy to read. The directions are easy to understand.

AAA Math http://www.aaamath.com/

This site has math activities by grade level and by math topic. These are mostly drill and skill math problems. Some problems have explanations and help. You can practice basic math, money, measurement, fractions, and more.

A+ Math http://www.aplusmath.com

This site is good for drill and practice in basic math. You can use the website to make your own flashcards and worksheets, or you can play some interesting math games. Try playing Math Bingo, Concentration or Hidden Picture to work on your adding, subtracting, multiplying or division skills. Worksheets can be printed out for basic math, algebra, fractions, money, and decimals.

TV411 http://www.tv411.org/index.shtml *(Adult Literacy Media Alliance – ALMA)*

Reading, writing, jobs, vocabulary, math, rulers, credit cards, learning, health, and more. Easy spelling.

Internet Picture Dictionary http://www.pdictionary.com/

This is a basic picture dictionary with spelling activities and word games. Browse by letter or category (animals, tools, clothing, colors, etc.), or search by key word. Activities include: Flashcards, Fill-in-the-Blanks, Word Scrambles, Stinky Spelling, and Straight Recall. Versions available in many different languages.

Literacy Tools http://www.literacytools.ie/welcome.cfm

This site has learning activities you can do online, or to print. It also has games and tutor aides. To work on spelling, click on print Exercises, then on Skills, and then on Spelling Sounds. Print out the pages to work on spelling.

Resources

Recruitment and retention of volunteers

Literacy Volunteers of Quebec Award: *http://literacyvolunteersqc.ca/award_Freda_Hudson.php*

National Volunteer Week Celebrations: *http://www.energizeinc.com/ideas/volwk.html*

Volunteer Recognition Gift Ideas: *http://volunteer.ca/en/nvw/gifts*

Volunteer Canada – Recognition: *http://volunteer.ca/en/volcan/vol-management/hints*

Volunteer BC – Inspiration: *http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/volunteers/stories.html*

Volunteer Recognition Tips from the Community Literacy of Ontario:
http://www.nald.ca/literacybasics/volunt/recognit/01.htm
http://www.nald.ca/volman/iyv/iyv2.htm

Other resources relating to learning

Adult learning: From theory to practice. Herod, L. (2003). Brandon, Manitoba: Family Literacy Events Committee.
Available online at http://www.nald.ca/adultlearningcourse/index.htm
In three modules, this program reviews current adult learning theory, relates theory to the practice of adult education, and provides tutors with ideas for dealing with the many factors that influence adult learning.

Family Math Fun! Nonesuch, K.
Available online at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/familymath/cover.htm
A manual of family numeracy activities, ready to use in early literacy programs, day care centres, primary grades and Adult Basic Education/Literacy programs. Patterns, recipes, and hand-outs all included.
Math for the whole person: Spirit, heart, body and mind are all connected in the activities in this book. When these are in balance, math becomes part of our whole lives, not a beast or a barrier.
Activities for the whole family: Things to do in the kitchen and on a walk, rhymes, games, and things to make, all to promote math thinking and learning.

Publications

Books for adult literacy learners
Grass Roots Press publishes and distributes books for adult learners. http://www.literacyservices.com

Newspapers
The Westcoast Reader. A Newspaper for adult learners published by Capilano University. Educational programs for adults, libraries, and multicultural agencies in British Columbia can receive the newspaper free of charge.
http://www.capcollege.bc.ca/about/publications/westcoast-reader.html

Audio-Visuals

Flight for Freedom. Canada Post video (adult learner real-life stories).

How Difficult Can This Be? PBS video on understanding Learning Disabilities, presented by Dr. Richard D. Lavoie

Deciphering Dyslexia. NFB, 2008.

Regina Public Library presents *Building reading comprehension*

Regina Public Library presents *Basic tutoring techniques*

Regina Public Library presents *Assessing adult learners*

Regina Public Library presents *What now? a framework for tutoring*

1. Roles and Responsibilities

The following are some basic assumptions about the roles and responsibilities of volunteer tutor coordinators, volunteer tutors, and adult learners in literacy programs.

What can volunteer tutors reasonably expect of their Volunteer Tutor Coordinator?

- to receive the same considerations and respect given paid employees
- to receive an orientation of the program
- to receive initial training and in-service training
- to receive a volunteer tutor job description
- to receive teaching materials
- to receive information on other training opportunities and literacy events
- to receive guidance and support
- to have access to and regular contact with the coordinator (in person or by phone)
- to have their time well used
- to be involved in the planning
- to feel part of a "team"
- to receive feedback on performance (evaluations)
- to be granted some flexibility
- to receive recognition

What can reasonably be expected of volunteer tutors?

- to attend training sessions, in-service workshops and recognition events
- to attend volunteer tutor meetings and sharing get-togethers
- to plan the course of study with the learner(s)
- to devote some personal time to preparation as required
- to meet regularly with the learner(s)
- to assume the role of tutor/facilitator rather than counselor
- to communicate regularly with the coordinator on learner's progress
- to discuss learner and/or program concerns with the coordinator
- to assist in the planning and evaluation of the program
- to return books / materials
- to make and keep a specific time commitment

What can reasonably be expected of adult learners?

- to give their attention to the lessons during class time / tutoring time
- to attend classes or sessions regularly, as agreed upon at the outset
- to complete homework as agreed upon
- to let the tutor know if they expect to be late, absent or unable to do homework
- to participate in planning the course of study with the tutor
- to let the tutor know when they don't understand something
- to respect the tutor's role as a facilitator, not as someone to do the learning for them
- to respect the limits of the tutor's responsibilities (i.e., they are there to tutor, not to provide counseling, transportation, etc.)

From *Demystifying Adult Literacy for Volunteer Tutors* (Charlene L. Ball for Literacy Partners of Manitoba).

Appendices

2. Sample Tutor Code of Ethics

Many adult literacy tutoring programs have a Code of Ethics to inform and guide their volunteer tutors. Here is an example of one:

Because tutors place high value on objectivity and integrity in the service they offer, they uphold this Code of Ethics:

- Tutors choose to help by teaching reading (writing, numeracy) and keep that the primary activity of tutoring.
- Tutors display an attitude of shared adulthood and respect for learners.
- Tutors protect the confidence placed in them by their learners, and keep any personal information offered by learners confidential.
- Tutors are bound to respect the confidentiality of other tutor-learner relationships.
- Tutors refer learners to appropriate program personnel when learners request help beyond the tutor's training or skills.
- Tutors do not speak on behalf of the program or organization without prior approval of appropriate personnel.
- Tutors keep the commitment of interest and time made to their learners and to the program.

Adapted from Watson and Bate (1991), p.82. From *Demystifying Adult Literacy for Volunteer Tutors* (Charlene L. Ball for Literacy Partners of Manitoba).

3. Sample Learner Agreement

I, [NAME], will try to make the best use of the service being provided to me.

As much as possible, I will keep the appointments that I make with my tutor, and try to arrive on time.

If I expect to be late, or have to cancel, I will show consideration by calling ahead of time.

Tutor phone #

Centre phone #

[Date] [Learner signature]

4. Learners' Bill of Rights

I have the right:

- to learn at my own pace and not feel stupid.
- to ask whatever questions I have.
- to need extra help.
- to ask for help.
- not to understand.
- to say, "I don't understand".
- to feel good about myself.
- to be treated as a competent adult.